

Abstract 340

TITLE: Keepin' it R.E.A.L.!: Results of Baseline Assessments for Participants Enrolled in a Mother-Adolescent HIV Prevention Program

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BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES: The purpose of this study was to identify factors associated with early sexual behaviors of 11-14 year old adolescents. The adolescents and their mothers were enrolled in a project designed to test the efficacy of two familybased HIV prevention interventions for adolescents. The project, called Keepin' it R.E.A.L.! consisted of two separate programs both of which included adolescents and their mothers in the intervention and in the assessment components of the study. The present study sought to identify factors associated with early sexual behavior using data obtained from the baseline assessments of adolescents.

METHODS: Mother and adolescent participants were recruited from a communitybased organization serving youth. Using lists of members, project recruiters called mothers on the telephone to determine eligibility and invite them to participate in the study. Eligibility criteria included a stable mother-adolescent relationship and adolescent between 11 and 14 years of age.

RESULTS: The mean age of adolescent participants was 12.2; 60.7% were boys, 98.2% were African American; 11.2% reported the initiation of sexual intercourse with a mean age of initiation of 11.1 years. Variables included in the analyses were: self-esteem, stress, future time perspective, ethnic identity, abstinence self-efficacy, abstinence outcome expectancies, parenting, and communication with parents. In the first analysis, initiation of sexual intercourse was the dependent variable and in the second analysis, degree of involvement in sexual behaviors served as the dependent variable. The results showed that adolescents who had already initiated sexual intercourse were more likely to be male, older, report greater levels of stress and lower abstinence self-efficacy. Variables associated with sexual behaviors, which led to sexual intercourse, were age, gender, self-esteem, stress, parental communication and self-efficacy.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings of the present study confirm those of earlier studies with respect to some personal factors associated with early initiation of sexual intercourse. In addition, the study adds to our understanding of the influence of some additional factors associated with early initiation of sexual intercourse and participation in behaviors, which often precede initiation of intercourse.

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